

U.S. Military Academy - Cavalry Stables  
West side of Swift Road, north of the Artillery Stables  
U.S. Military Academy  
West Point  
Orange County  
New York

HABS No. NY-5708-47

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY - CAVALRY STABLES

LOCATION: West side of Swift Road, north of the Artillery Stables  
(HABS No. NY-5708-46), west of the Buffalo Soldier Field.  
U.S. Military Academy, West Point, Orange County, New York.

USGS, West Point Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: 18.586640.4581180.

PRESENT OWNER  
AND OCCUPANT: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.

PRESENT USE: Offices, U.S. Military Academy.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Cavalry Stables is one of a group of five Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson buildings that define the western and southern edges of Buffalo Soldier Field. The neo-gothic character of the buildings create a cohesive group and reflect the general style of the firm's work at the Academy. Although their original function no longer exists, the five buildings are symbolic of an historic military tradition.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1904-1908.
2. Architect: Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, Architects, Boston and New York.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.
4. Builder: Church Construction Company. The Church Company defaulted on construction and the work was finished by the bonding company.
5. Original plans and construction: Consult the original Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson drawings in the Facilities Engineer's Office, U.S. Military Academy for the original interior arrangement. As a unit the buildings cost \$547,107.

The Annual Report of 1909 mentions the site work: "The work of grading, top soiling, and seeding the new artillery and cavalry drill ground, at the south end of the post, was completed early in June, with the exception of a small portion in the vicinity of the south gate guardhouse, which had to be postponed until the stonecutting yard of one of the contractors could be removed. This was done early in July, and the

grading of the new drill ground practically completed by August 1. A good growth of pasture grass has been obtained, which it is believed will withstand the wear and tear of mounted drill sufficiently to prevent the annoyance from dust that usually occurred when the old ground was used."

6. Alterations and additions: "The Cavalry stables have retained their original form since their completion in 1908. In 1954 they were converted for use as a warehouse. The chimneys were removed, and a new roof put on in 1955. In 1975 the interior was gutted, and a new structural system, second floor, and roof were added." (Crashof)
- B. Historical Context: The Cavalry Stables was designed as part of a group which consisted of the Cavalry Barracks (HABS No. NY-5708-28), the Artillery Stables (HABS No. NY-5708-46), the Artillery Barracks (HABS No. NY-5708-27) and the Gun Shed (HABS No. NY-5708-56). These were grouped around the "Cavalry and Artillery Plain" where instruction was given. The area was renamed Buffalo Soldier Field after the Ninth Cavalry detachment of black cavalymen assigned to West Point in 1907. For the historical context of this area within the overall development of West Point see HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 2: "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy."

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Cavalry Stables is representative of the work of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson at the U.S. Military Academy in the first decade of the 20th century. The brick exterior walls with limestone detailing, the protruding "buttresses" on the sallyports and the end elevations, and the strong, vertical massing of the central entry sallyport combine to create a medieval image that was highly distinctive on a campus that, at that time, was composed of a wide variety of architectural styles. Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson was, without doubt, the most prominent architectural firm at West Point in this century. Their work is a clear reflection of the "medievalist" craftsman philosophy of Ralph Adams Cram. This is seen not only in their other buildings at the Academy, but also in their later work nationally.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition.

### B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Cavalry Stables is a rectangular building, one story tall, measuring 368' along the front (east) by 78 feet. The extreme length of the building is tied together by a strong, vertical, three story, central sallyport balanced by corner sallyports. The building is 33 bays between protruding brick piers on the front facade by seven bays on the north and south facades.
2. Foundation: Concrete is used for the footings, while the foundation walls are concrete and granite with a granite water table.

3. Walls: The exterior walls at the Cavalry Stables are red brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern with limestone detailing. A raised "venting" gable with wood sides exists near the top of the gable roof.

Protruding brick piers punctuate the bay divisions of the front and rear facades, while brick "buttresses" are situated on the corners of the sallyports.

Limestone is used extensively for the trim on the building, including window sills and lintels, beltcourses, pointed arches and parapet capping.

Above the main entry, at the top of the sallyport, is the only distinctive exterior wall embellishment--a carved limestone panel, similar to the one on the Cavalry Barracks, composed of a pair of crossed swords and the letters "USMA".

4. Structural systems: Load bearing brick walls with brick facing comprise the structural system of the exterior walls. The flooring is a vitrified brick on grade on the first level and wood supported by wood joists on the second. The roofing system is composed of wood rafters.
5. Sallyports, chimneys: A central three story entry sallyport dominates the front facade. It is composed of two towers flanking a one story, arched entryway with a gable peak connecting the towers at the top. Limestone beltcourses run around the sallyport, and it is punctuated by vertical slit openings at the top.

Four sallyport/towers stand at the four corners of the building, with limestone trim, arches and parapet capping.

One rectangular brick chimney exists on the building, incorporated into the rear wall of the entry sallyport.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Eight doorways lead into the Cavalry Stables: one in the central entry sallyport, two on the north facade, three on the rear facade and two on the south facade. The main entry retains its large double wood doors with square wood panels below, glazed panels above; large strap hinges; and smaller, human-scaled doors in the middle. The doors on the north side are also original fabric, being double wood doors made of diagonal wood panels below and six lights above. The rear facade was one original set of diagonally paneled wood doors topped by six lights in the center and two recent overhead garage doors to either side. The south elevation has a recent wood panel door set within a partially bricked-in opening and an altered original door to fit where a lintel has replaced the original arched opening.
- b. Windows: The majority of the windows on the front and rear facades are six pane pivoting metal windows with metal bars over them. The exceptions are one-over-one double-hung metal sash in six bays flanking the central sallyport; four-over-four double-hung wood sash with a four pane light above in the sallyport; six-over-nine

double-hung metal sash on the first level of the two story central section of the rear facade; and one-over-two double-hung metal sash on its second level.

The north and south facades have two-over-two double-hung wood sash with two lights above on the first level and three and six pane casement windows on the second level. Metal bars cover the first level windows.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: The gable roof is covered with a variety of colored slate placed in a random pattern.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The building has a plain limestone cornice and exposed wood rafters under the eaves.

C. Description of the Interior: The interior of the Cavalry Stables has been extensively remodeled and was not surveyed.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The Cavalry Stables is oriented to the east, defining the northwestern portion of the Buffalo Soldier Field. The land is level on a broad plain to the east. To the north the land rises in a small hill moderately covered with coniferous trees. The land is terraced up to the rear to the Cavalry Barracks (HABS No. NY-5708-28) before rising sharply in a heavily wooded hillside. To the south is the Artillery Stables (HABS No. NY-5708-46). The site is exposed on all sides.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: Original ink-on-linen working drawings are in the Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy. Subsequent alteration drawings are also found there.

B. Early Views: Early photographs can be found in the U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. Some of these are reproduced in the Crashof and Lange volumes of this project.

C. Bibliography:

- 1. Primary and unpublished sources: Records, U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. See bibliographic essay in the Lange volume of this project for a listing of record groups.

- 2. Secondary and published sources:

Annual Reports, U.S. Military Academy Archives.

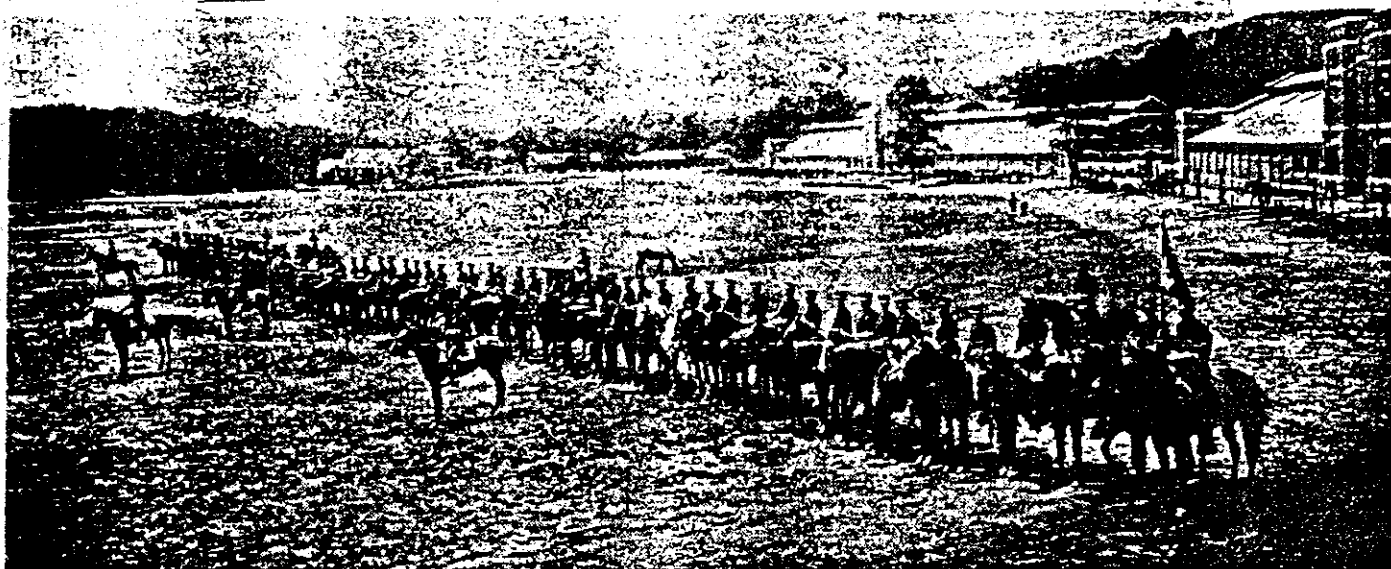
Crashof, Bethanie C. "Building Analysis and Preservation Guidelines for Category I and Selected Category II Buildings at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

Lange, Robie S. "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

- D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: The records of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson.
- E. Supplemental Material:
  - 1. "Saga of the 'Buffalo Soldiers,'" Pointer View, May 18, 1973.

1. "Saga of the 'Buffalo Soldiers'" from the Pointer

View, May 18, 1973, U.S. Military Academy Archives



Part of Ninth Cavalry's "Buffalo Soldiers" assigned to West Point in 1910. Bldgs. 622 and 626 were then stables. (USMA Archives)

## Recounted for Armed Forces ceremonies

# Saga of the 'Buffalo Soldiers'

For 20 years after the Civil War two black cavalry regiments wrestled the West — from the Dakotas to the Rio Grande — wrangling with hostile Indians, bandits, cattle thieves, murderous gunmen, bootleggers, trespassers, and Mexican revolutionaries.

Near the turn of the century both regiments galloped into the war with Spain, storming San Juan Hill with the Rough Riders and joining the siege of Santiago.

Yet the black cavalrymen — dubbed "Buffalo Soldiers" by Indian warriors who learned to respect the dogged Black soldiers — rode quietly and inconspicuously through the chapters of American history.

One of their last rides in the early 1900's brought them to West Point where they turned to training cadets in horsemanship.

Today the Cavalry is gone and the stables are offices. But the name becomes a permanent fixture when West Point salutes the Buffalo Soldiers in Armed Forces Day ceremonies at 1:30 p.m., Saturday. Cavalry Plain, now an athletic field at the south end of West Point, will be dedicated and renamed Buffalo Soldier Field.

Former members of the Ninth and Tenth U.S. Cavalry Regiments and members of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry Association will attend the ceremonies on the field along with local dignitaries. LTG William

A. Knowlton, USMA Superintendent, will deliver the keynote address.

The ceremonies will only be a part of Armed Forces Day activities planned for West Point and Highland Falls. (See box).

A regiment of cadets is also expected to join marching units in the Armed Forces Day Parade in New York City.

The remarkable story of the unheralded

Buffalo Soldiers' efforts in taming the West unfolds in William H. Leckie's book, *The Buffalo Soldier*.

Leckie noted in his study that "in thousands of pages the Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Cavalry, great regiments all, rode and fought their way to glory, but the Negro troopers were usually dismissed with a bare mention, ignored completely, or their efforts mocked."

"Many a frontier official owed his life and his job to the support given him by these Black men in blue."

As the Indian Wars subsided, Buffalo Soldiers played an integral role in the War with Spain. They fought in the Philippines and Cuba. General Pershing, who earned his nickname of Black Jack by leading Black troops in the West, was proud of his Black troops in the Santiago campaign. Colonel Teddy Roosevelt later wrote, "The 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments fought one on either side of mine at Santiago, and I wish no better men beside me in battle than these colored troops showed themselves to be."

In 1907 a detachment of the Ninth Cavalry was assigned to West Point in support of cadet riding instruction and mounted drill, which was conducted on the ground now known as Cavalry Plain.

In 1931 it was replaced by the 2nd Squadron of the Tenth Cavalry which remained at West Point until its de-activation in 1946.

## Tomorrow's slate

TIME	EVENT
10 a.m.- 4 p.m.	Equipment Display at Buffalo Soldier Field.
1:30 p.m.	Dedication Cere- mony & Cadet Review at Buffalo Soldier Field.
2:15 p.m.	Demonstration by Cadet Riding Club at Buffalo Soldier Field.
3:30 p.m.	Sky Diving Demon- stration by Cadet Parachute Club at Buffalo Soldier Field.
9 a.m.- 5 p.m.	Spring Sidewalk Sale and Arts Festival in High- land Falls.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation is part of a multi-year project sponsored by the National Park Service and the United States Military Academy, explained in the United States Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 1, "Methodology." This written documentation was prepared by Travis C. McDonald, Jr. and Timothy Lindblad, architectural historians, in 1984-1985 based on fieldwork conducted in 1984.